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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NAIROBI 004674

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Summary

¶11. (C) Sheikh Adan Mohamed Nur "Madobe," Speaker of the Transitional Federal Parliament of Somalia, told us Parliament is highly likely not to endorse PM Hussein's cabinet as announced December 2. Moreover, if submitted as now formulated and rejected by Parliament, Madobe said the government would be back to "zero," and Parliament would expect a completely new cabinet list, including a new PM. We are urging PM Hussein to move quickly and decisively to make the changes necessary to have the kind of competent, inclusive cabinet needed. End Summary.

Madobe Meeting

¶12. (C) Staff from Post's Somalia Unit spoke December 5 with Sheikh Adan Mohamed Nur "Madobe" (Rahanweyn/Mirifle/ Sagaal/Hadame), Speaker of the Transitional Federal Parliament, on the prospects of Parliament approving Prime Minister Hussein's proposed 31-member cabinet. Madobe told us Hussein's proposed cabinet, which has been made public but has not been submitted for parliamentary approval, is even weaker than the previous cabinet of Prime Minister Gedi. Madobe asserted that as proposed, the cabinet has little chance of being approved by Parliament. Madobe told us he thought the new PM had a real opportunity to reach out to the opposition and bring into the cabinet recognized experts and individuals who would truly represent the interests of their clans and get the transition back on track. Madobe, who was en route back from the IGAD Parliamentary meeting in Addis Ababa and thus had not been in Baidoa, said that he had expected to be consulted.

¶13. (C) Instead, according to Madobe, Hussein spent all of three days in Baidoa and presented the list as a fait accompli. (Comment: Hussein had been in Baidoa since prior to his November 22 appointment. End Comment). Madobe said he asked Hussein to hold off and seek broader consultation designed to achieve greater inclusiveness, but Hussein declined. Madobe claimed Hussein was given the cabinet list by President Yusuf and he implied Hussein had no option but to proceed with it. Madobe, and his advisors, insisted that if Hussein submits the cabinet list as it now stands, then it will not be endorsed by Parliament, including the position of Prime Minister. Pressed for clarification, we were told twice that the government would be back to "zero" and Parliament would expect a completely new cabinet list, including a PM. Madobe added that it is

the prerogative of the President to resubmit the name of Hussein as PM if he so chooses. He stressed that PM Hussein has 14 days to submit a cabinet list to Parliament. (Comment: Madobe's accounting is unclear. The Transitional Federal Charter gives the Prime Minister 30 days to submit a new government to Parliament for approval. Parliament endorsed the PM on November 24. Therefore, by our calculations, Hussein should have until December 24 to submit his proposed cabinet to Parliament. End Comment).

¶4. (C) Madobe has reached out to the Adane family in Nairobi, meeting with the son and younger brother of Abukar Adane (Hawiye/Abgal/Harti/Warsengeli), a chief financier of the Islamic Courts, and he has met with representatives of the opposition based in Djibouti and Asmara. He said he is open to non-MPs serving in the cabinet and he is trying to pull in the opposition. Madobe stressed that he wants to work "hand-in-hand" with the United States. "The people have lost hope," he said, and he wants to ensure that the opportunity is not lost to form a more inclusive and competent government.

Ethiopia Disappointed Too

¶5. (C) Madobe's version is at odds in several respects with PM Hussein's and may be somewhat self-serving. For example, he is known to have flip-flopped several times when efforts were being made to replace PM Gedi. Nonetheless, the fact is the new PM, who had a good reception up until the announcement of his cabinet choices December 2, is being criticized from several quarters on the caliber of his first cabinet. The Ethiopians told Special Envoy Yates earlier and subsequently during the December 5 consultation with Secretary Rice that they were extremely disappointed with the cabinet. As previously reported (reftel), a large number of Somalis are too.

Hussein Must Move Quickly

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¶6. (C) PM Hussein told Special Envoy Yates that he had been under the gun to select the cabinet before going to Addis Ababa and he had known that more changes would be necessary to have the kind of competent, inclusive cabinet needed. He thought that he could change piecemeal over the next several weeks. We urged him to use the situation to move more quickly and decisively as soon as possible. PM Hussein and his advisors took that on board. He is going to represent the TFG in Lisbon but will be back in Nairobi by December 10 at which time we and others will be giving strong, direct advice.

RANNEBERGER